1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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endurance and out-sing and out-party most of the men fifty years younger than himself.[6]

Since Tu'untalumi was a senior Tiwi household head who spent more of his time attending festivals, funerals, fights, and other collective occasions than did most of his contemporaries, it is instructive to examine his movements over a full year. If he had kept an engagement book during 1928-29, it would have looked something like this:

Early April (end of wet season): Leaves his home base in Tangio where he has spent most of the wet season and visits the Mission station to attend a few small funerals (children who have died at the Mission in the preceding months). During these funerals a series of fights and duels also takes place. Total people present: perhaps fifty or sixty. Time thus spent in helping to wind up public business: five days. Returns home to Tangio and remains there for rest of April.

End of April: Goes to Rangu with a big party of other Tiklauila for a funeral (junior elder). Fairly big funeral, lots of people, lots of disputes. Time away, including leisurely journey to and from Rangu, about two weeks. Gets back home about middle of May.

Middle of May—end of June: Lives quietly at home with his household in Tangio.

About July 1st: Goes to Mission for a few days, "visits" with whoever is there. Tries out a new composition of his own (song and dance) on group camped at Mission. Returns home for rest of July.

Last week of July: Taking his younger wives and their children with two senior wives in charge of them, sets out for Malau for a big funeral with lots of people and fights. There he performs his new dance; is much consulted on ceremonial matters by the Malauila; gets into a few fights himself but handles them with dignity and honor; remains in Malau two weeks; stops off to visit and attend a small funeral with the Munupula on his way back; has a fight with a Munupula while there; returns to the Mission; stays there a day or two dispensing all the news from Malau and Munupi to those camped there; issues invitations for a grass burning in some sections of Tangio which were not burned in April or May. Goes on home to Tangio where some of his older wives have remained during his absence. Total time away: about three weeks.

End of August: Is joined in Tangio by several other Tiklauila and Rangwila households whom he has invited. Grass burning and joint kangaroo hunting goes on for four or five days. Dancing and partying at night. After five days most of visiting group leave and he and his household remain alone in Tangio until well into October.

[6] There is no suggestion that Tu'untalumi was in any way an official ritual leader. All old men, by virtue of their years, were to some extent ritual leaders; he had merely worked harder and longer at it than most of them. His tirelessly joyful personality had a good deal to do with his success in the self-established role. In a culture that might be thought likely to make all its men gloomy, anxiety-ridden introverts, he was a warm, happy, dignified old extrovert and he was widely admired.

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riage with a boy who was willing to become the "worker" of the girl's controller.[9]

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From the economic standpoint, the large household has much the same function as before the days of the Mission. The younger women go out together and gather food; the old women stay home with the young children. The younger men bring home choice items, which now are trade goods and money from Darwin. The "boss" of the great household is wealthy; today, he has food, tobacco, clothes, and usually sufficient money to gamble. The composition of the great households has altered, but their function is very much the same. The establishment of the monogamous Catholic Cabbagee is even larger than that of the polygamous old pagan, Ki-in-kumi, described in an earlier chapter; Cabbagee, with only one wife, has more women under his "control" than ever Ki-in-kumi had, despite his list of twenty-one wives. The Tiwi have thus been able to retain their large households even under the Mission-imposed system of monogamy.

The Change from Patriliny to Matriliny

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In the pre-Cooper era of feuding, the largest significant units among the Tiwi were the bands; the Tiwi never, in that by-gone day, acted as a tribe, even in their attacks upon such outsiders as the British. In the 1950's, when informants talked of the old days they commonly mentioned that male members of old bands came together as units to go on war parties. These old bands did not have a strict rule of descent. But, as has already been indicated, the majority of the males were regarded all their lives as members of the band to which their father belonged. That is, the major unit of the old Tiwi social structure was patrilineal in emphasis.

[611]

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There also existed in the old Tiwi pattern a strictly matrilineal clan organization, related primarily to totemism. One of the totemic animals of a clan stood for a member of that clan in the song composed to commemorate his death; for instance, the first line of the mourning song for a deceased male of the Red Paint Clan might be "I am red paint." Occasionally, several members of a clan helped one of their number in a fight, but this was apparently not very common before the Mission era. This clan-organization pattern prevailed among the Tiwi through about 1930. Then major and most unpredictable changes began.

[533] 765

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What does one expect to happen when a society which has a patrilineal emphasis, like the old Tiwi one, comes into contact with a European society where, if there is any emphasis, it is a patrilineal one? Although one would ordinarily expect a strengthening of patriliny, such was not the case among the Tiwi. The old social unit which was predominantly patrilineal was a territorial group with its major functions in the system of feuding. When the

[9] By 1933, the terms "boss" and "worker" had come into the local Tiwi dialect to indicate superordinate and subordinate status interrelationships.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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764 of *Pulumimburi's* wife, *Nulatini*, which I saw, the general pattern was similar. I shall, however, describe both burials, that of *Nulatini* being the more detailed.

(1) *The Burial of Waniamperi*

On the day that *Waniamperi* died, *Marawani*, one of his near relatives, who wanted the dead man buried near his mother, paid a young "worker"[58] a sum of money and two loin cloths to dig the grave.

When the corpse was brought to the burial ground, a number of relatives had a last look at the dead man before he was laid on a series of logs, placed transversely across the bottom of the grave.

This act was a signal for concerted mourning, the women beating themselves with sticks and the men cutting their heads. For personal safety it is [753] [626] imperative that each man and woman show excessive grief, real or feigned, otherwise the *mopaditi*, annoyed at the lack of grief, will make the offending person ill.

After the mourning died down, the "workers" placed boughs on the body and filled in the grave, leaving a small mound on top (Pl. 24c).

● [533] While this work was being carried out, the relatives stood on one side of the grave, either singing the *amburu*, the mourning song, or the rain song of Wailu, the totem of *Tiparawilimiri*, *Waniamperi's* father. To the chanting [535] of this song, the men acted the rain dance (Pl. 30a). The aborigines did not stage the totemic dances or chant the songs belonging to the fire totem of Wuriupi (*Waniamperi's* own totem), because, to have done so, would have especially attracted the attention of his *mopaditi*.

The "workers" laid *Waniamperi's* personal belongings at the base of a tree (Pl. 24d), tied his loin cloth and tobacco to the top of a thin sapling which had been driven into the ground at the head of the grave, made a large fire, and left a container of water.

[775] The aborigines believe that the *mopaditi*, seeing his belongings near at hand, water to drink and fire to warm himself and cook the food he gathers in the surrounding forest, will stay near the grave until the time comes for him to leave the locality.

While the "workers" were engaged on those tasks, the rest of the burial party quietly left, not looking behind, lest the *mopaditi* follow them to their camp.

[767] [58] These "workers" or *wanarai*, being distant relatives of the dead, are in little danger from the *mopaditis*. Therefore, it is safe for them to clean the site, dig the grave, handle the body, and carry out other tasks associated with burial. They are paid for their work by the chief mourners at the final *pukamani* rituals.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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765 177 533 [539] Parading around the unlit fire in the centre of the *milimika*, the performers chanted a telephone song, the literal translation of which is, "Hallo, that telephone there, hallo, yes, yes," some, as they did so, imitating the winding of the handle of an old-type magneto telephone.

When the fire, which had been started by a young man, was well alight, the men performed the ritual of *wandiatapinda* by jumping through flames and smoke, each shouting "telegraphy".

The men again assembled at the edge of the *milimika*, and, led by the *alowia*, called the localities on Melville Island where the white men had camped. As each name was called the aborigines shouted "*wia*" (yes).

One dancer held his hands high above his head, symbolizing a radio aerial, while his companions chanted the following words to the refrain of the telephone song:

[539] "The Queen sent a radio asking *Wurarbuti* and other men to dance for her."

Then followed songs related to the radio and the telephone. These were usually performed with the traditional steps and gestures, except that, at the end, the actor mimed the ringing up with one hand, and the holding of the [535] telephone to the ear with the other.[60] As the men danced, the women moved into the *milimika* from the side, performing their own dance, the *awburu* (Pl. 30F), some of them crying and endeavouring to beat themselves. They were, however, restrained by their companions.

765 After a number of dances came the ceremony of appointing the men to carry out the work near the grave.

[616] At the death of any person the tribe divides into two groups: the *pukamunis*, near relatives of the dead, who are forbidden to touch food with their hands (Pl. 24A), or go near the grave, and the distant relatives, who can visit the grave site without fear of attack from the spirit (the *mopaditi*).

At *Waniamperi's* first *ilania*, the ceremonial leader chose, from the latter group, ten men, the *wanaras*, colloquially called the "workers". It was their duty to cut and paint the burial poles (one each), help to clear the grave site and dancing ground of sticks and stones, and to carry out other menial tasks associated with the final rituals. For these tasks, the "workers" were paid on the last day of the rituals.

When "workers" were chosen, the aged brother, *Nalgui*, of the dead man,

[60] This mixture of the ancient and the modern, shows how a living culture gradually absorbs the characteristics of an adjacent people, particularly those from a culture as dominant as our own.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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announced that he had bought enough food from the store at the settlement to feed all the men who were to cut the poles.[61]

Following this announcement, the chief woman mourner, *Prupadau*, whose privilege it was to decide on the size of the burial poles, marked with her toe, in the dust of the *milimika*, the length and thickness of a series of oversized poles.

This led to a great deal of discussion between the leader, *Wurarbui*, and the woman, *Prupadau*, before he finally persuaded her to reduce the dimensions of the poles to a reasonable size. *Prupadau* wanted the poles for her relative to be as many and as large as possible.

This matter settled, the "workers" brought a number of steel axes into the *milimika*. The *alawia*, painting the handles white and putting red cross lines on the blades, stood the axes in the centre of the dancing ground. Then both the *alawia* and the other performers walked around the axes singing the telephone song.

A series of traditional dances followed, representing *Jirakati*, the white-headed sea-eagle (Pl. 30j), *Puruti*, the sea-osprey, and *Tjalati*, the jabiru (Pl. 29A).[62] Two women and two young boys performed the shark (*Taduwale*) dance (Pl. 25c), the ritual finishing with the honey and mosquito calls. The "workers" picked up their axes and walked away, accompanied by everyone except *Prupadau*, who remained behind, still chanting the *amburu* song of mourning.

(*b*) *The Second Ilanias*

The second series of *ilanias* was performed about halfway between *Wurarbui's* camp and the burial ground.

In this series, we were able to see the traditional pattern of the *ilanias* in operation, including the return and feeding of the "workers" after their day's labour of cutting the poles near the grave site. The songs and dances, too, instead of referring, as in the first *ilanias*, to the goods of the white man, his radio and his telephones, dealt almost exclusively with dances belonging to the locality of Wallu, north-eastern Melville Island, the country of *Waniamperi's* father and the totemic place of fresh water, *Andjalui* (p. 42).

This series of *ilanias* could be divided into five sections,

[61] At the present time, this is just a traditional gesture, reminiscent of the days when it was the duty of the *pukamuni* group to feed the workers while they cut and painted the poles (Pl. 25B).

[62] In a creation myth, the jabiru is called *Tipuru-undunga*. It is likely that the bird has several names. Hart (1930, p. 280), draws attention to the multiplicity of names among the Tiwi.

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765 slipped down the tree and jumped clear of the fire, the other participants
372 called his totemic name.

Toward the end of this series of *ilanias*, the "workers" announced that they had finished cutting the poles. The leader, the *alouvia*, hearing this, gave permission for the poles to be "cooked", i.e., burnt in a fire of blazing boughs, to provide a black ground on which to paint the designs. The leader
[202] also ordered that the *purunkiuas* (message sticks, Figs. 5, 6, 7), be sent out to the various totemic groups. These sticks intimated that the final *pukamuni* ceremonies would take place in about twenty days.

765 (c) *The Bathurst Island Ilanias*

About a week before the final burial rituals of *Waniamperi*, a number of aborigines from Bathurst Island, accompanied by their wives and *Katopi*, the son of the dead man, made their camp and cleared a ceremonial ground not far from the second *milimika* used by the Melville Island people.

The Bathurst Island *ilanias*, under the leadership of an elderly aboriginal, *Jibungliaiuni*, followed the traditional form, except that the first two phases were omitted, i.e., the fighting and the feeding of the "workers".

Three groups of songs were chanted to the accompaniment of the appropriate dances.

(i) The *Ningaui* songs and dances.

(ii) The mission lugger songs and dances.

(iii) The jabiru (*Tjalati*) songs and dances.

(i) *The Ningaui Songs and Dances*

533 The leader, *Jibungliaiuni*, and his companions chanted the following
539 *Ningaui* songs. These are the literal translations.
765

"I am the head man of the *Ningaui*, I am, Eeh, Eeh."[67]

"I push aside the mangrove branches with my hands, Eeh, Eeh."

"The *Ningauis* are out hunting. The calls of the white cockatoos tell them that someone is coming, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* woman, having just given birth to a child, sings—

"The flies are looking at me, the flies are crawling on my shoulder, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* man, looking at his newly born child, sings—

"Little new-born man lying on the ground, Eeh, Eeh."

[825] [67] This is the call of the *Ningauis* which, the aborigines claim, they hear in the mangrove swamps of south-western Bathurst Island. It is possibly the call of one of the swamp birds.

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Neither *Jilungfiahumi* nor any of the Bathurst Islanders performed spirited dances to these songs. The leader, impersonating a *Ningaui*, walked round the *milimiks* with awkward, bent gait, either beating his music sticks together or holding his hands tightly against his sides with his fingers outstretched (Pl. 30E).

Following the *Ningaui* songs, the men lit a fire at the base of a eucalyptus tree which *Kaupi*, *Nangrinini*, and several other relatives of the dead man, climbed to perform the rite of *wandiatapinda*. As each man slid down the trunk, the aborigines called the totemic place of Wailu, and the names of rain, thunder and lightning. Later, the men performed the rain dance (Pl. 30B) in the *milimiks*, while the women, coming in from the side, danced the *amburu* (Pl. 30F).

(ii) *The Mission Lugger Songs and Dances*

The dances started with a long *ai, ai, ai*, which announced that the boat had been sighted. Then, while the men danced the sail of the boat, with their hands held above their heads, the leader chanted—

"The waves beat the sides of the boat, but it goes straight on."

With high prancing steps and hands rotating one over the other, the aborigines mimed the engines and the propeller of the lugger.

"The engines spark together as the waves hit the side of the boat."

Other songs, to which the performers danced the relevant actions, were—

"The wake of the lugger."

"The lugger is on the slips ready to be painted."

"We are scrubbing off the old paint and giving it a new coat."

Every time *Kaupi*, the son of the dead man, took part in the dance, the women set up a wail.

At the conclusion of the boat songs, the men and women took part in the *punuti*, lightly beating each other's spouses and their relatives with boughs.

(iii) *The Jabiru Songs and Dances*

The last series of dances were given by a middle-aged Bathurst Island man, *Nilituma*, who imitated, with humorous gesticulation and much abandon, the antics of the long-legged jabiru, *Tjalati* (Pl. 29A), as it walked, fished and rested in the lagoon.

The words of the *Tjalati* song were—

"When *Tjalati* lifts one leg, he is ready to fly."

At the conclusion of the *Tjalati* dance, the *ilania* ended with the honey and mosquito calls.

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765 (2) *The Ilanias of Nulatini*

[123] We were able to see the opening mourning rituals, *iramparimi*[66] of *Nulatini* and six of her *ilanias*.

[128] Rather than deal with all of these ceremonies in detail, I will describe the *iramparimi* rituals and a typical *ilania*, in which the aborigines carried out all phases of the rituals, with the exception of the appointment of the "workers". Although the rite of *pumuti*, *wandiatapinda*, or feeding the "workers", did not take place at every *ilania*, they will be included in this description.

(a) *The Opening Mourning Ritual, Iramparimi of Nulatini*

Ten days after the burial of *Nulatini*, the aborigines of Melville Island performed the ritual of *iramparimi*. The function of that ceremony was to express [775] grief over *Nulatini's* death, and to tell her spirit that, as she did not now belong to the same realm as themselves, she must leave her grave and return to her totemic country.

The ceremony was held about thirty yards from the camp of the dead woman. Most of the aborigines were present, but two men, *Pulanimbuwi*, the husband, and *Tupiatira*, *Nulatini's* nearest relative, took the leading parts.

[302] The rituals opened in the late afternoon with *Pulanimbuwi*, painted in white, elaborately decorated and carrying a long stick, walking slowly to- [533] ward the assembled people, singing the *amburu*, the women's song of mourning (Pl. 23A).

Every now and again, the husband stopped, leaned on his stick and looked round (apparently for his wife's *mopaditi*), before continuing on his way to the place of ceremony.

Coming out of the forest in an almost opposite direction was *Tupiatira*, also painted in white, waving green branches in his hands. About fifty yards from the old camp of *Nulatini*, *Tupiatira* called her name loudly, and, after listening for a while, announced that, as she had not answered, she must be dead.

As *Tupiatira* walked forward he continued to call, while *Pulanimbuwi*, now accompanied by his sister, *Kundi*, came in from the opposite direction, both singing the *amburu*. When the men were only a few yards apart the aborigines formed themselves into two lines, facing each other.

[535] At a signal and a loud "*Book, book*" from *Pulanimbuwi*, an old man, *Mahunirinita*, accompanied by six to eight of the men, danced between the

[66] The *iramparimi* of *Waniampari* was performed before our arrival.

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lines as flying foxes (the totem of *Nulatini's* father),[60] their arms moving alternately up and down and their little fingers pointed skyward (Pl. 30c).

The dance finished, the assembled men accompanied by *Pulanimbuwi* and *Tupiatira*, with their arms around each other's necks, mourned hysterically for the dead, while the women danced the *amburu* on the outside of the group. Several times, in his grief, *Tupiatira* collapsed to the ground only to be lifted to his feet again by the still mourning husband.

The sounds of mourning continued for some time, gradually becoming less until *Nangrinini* gave the honey and mosquito calls, and the ceremony was over.

(*b*) *The Ilania*

At one end of the *milimika*, which was situated at the camp of the dead woman, was a pole on which *Pulanimbuwi* had tied a piece of printed calico as a flag.

The *ilania* opened when seven of the "workers" giving the honey and mosquito calls, emerged from the forest, and, running toward the *milimika*, cast sticks and pandanus leaves, as spears, at the *pukamuni* men who awaited them. There was general fighting and much laughter before the "workers" were ejected.

In the centre of the *milimika*, as food for the "workers" a woman had placed nine large cooked crabs which the "workers" distributed among themselves. After this was done, the men performed the rite of *wandiatapinda* by either walking through or jumping over the fire which had been lit in the *milimika*. *Nulatini's* husband did not take part in this ritual but, with a flat fighting stick in either hand, wandered about the ceremonial ground, singing the *amburu*.

Following these rituals, the aborigines chanted a number of songs and carried out the following dances, those of the flying fox being totemically related to the dead woman's father.

(i) The flying foxes and the sea-eagle.
(ii) The crocodile.
(iii) The shark and the stingray.
(iv) The flag songs.

(i) *The flying-fox and sea-eagle songs*

"The flying foxes are out late, eating the blossoms of the stringy-bark and eucalyptus trees."

[60] As mentioned earlier, the totem of the dead person is never referred to in the *pukamuni* rituals.

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533 "The sea-eagle, *Jirakui*, dives upon the flying foxes, catching them in
539 her claws and eating them. The rest fly away."
765 "The flying foxes call to each other, the sea-eagle is attacking us—let us go."

As these songs were being chanted, a number of men clustered in the centre of the *milimika*, like a group of flying foxes in a tree.

With a loud call, *Nangrinini*, his outspread arms symbolical of the wings of the sea-eagle, *Jirakui* (Pl. 30j), "swooped" down, scattering them in all directions.

As *Nangrinini* returned to the outside of the *milimika*, the "flying foxes"
[535] reassembled and, with prancing steps again danced with their little fingers pointing upward (Pl. 30c).

The flying-fox songs continued—

"Cast your throwing sticks where the flying foxes are thickest and break many wings at one time."

"Hit the flying foxes so that they will drop in the mud."

"Cook the black flying foxes and dry them in the sun."[10]

Again the men assembled and danced the flying-fox while *Malumerinita* called the totemic places of the flying fox at Muranapi (p. 56), interspersed with calls of "*Wia*" from his companions. *Pulaninkawi* still wandered.

(ii) *The crocodile songs*

"You cannot cross the river because it is full of crocodiles."

"Beware, the crocodiles are in the mangroves waiting to catch us when we cross the river."

These songs were accompanied by the spirited crocodile dance (Pl. 30e),
[535] while *Malumerinita* called the names of the totemic places of the crocodile, *Jirakupai*, on south-west Bathurst Island.

(iii) *The shark and the stingray song*

"Do not spear the shark, it is chasing a stingray."

To this song several men performed the exhausting shark dance (Pl. 30o).

(iv) *The flag songs*

"The wind blows and the flag moves."

[177] "The Government Administrator gets his flag from the Queen."
535 To these songs, the man danced with their hands, as a flag, moving above
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[10] This song suggests that the Melville Islanders stored or traded the cooked and dried bodies of these creatures.

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their heads. During these songs, the husband sat quietly at one end of the *milimika*, with his head in his hands (Pl. 23a). 765 [535]

The *ilania* concluded with *Nangrinini* calling *Aluprumani* (a mangrove bird); *Malumerinita* calling *Tjirinini* (the red-backed sea-eagle) and the assembled men, making the honey and mosquito call.

During one of the *ilanias* of *Nulatini*, a near relative had his name changed from *Miralipaiwa* to *Tukuwuinganili*.[71] [533]

(3) *The Ilanias of Makapini*

At the same time as the *pukamuni* of *Waniamperi* was being performed, an old woman, *Makapini*, was baptized at Bathurst Island by the priest, just as she was dying, and, although she had never accepted Christianity, was buried, against the wishes of her relatives, in the mission cemetery. 797

The aborigines of both Bathurst and Melville Island were distressed over this incident because as *Makapini* had always been a "pagan" (as the mission authorities call the unconverted), her spirit could not go to the white man's "heaven", and, as the *pukamuni* ceremonies were prohibited on Bathurst Island, the spirit of *Makapini* was doomed to wander, lonely and unhappy, for ever. To prevent such a calamity (for lonely *mopaditis* are a danger to the living), the aborigines of Melville Island performed a modified *pukamuni*, called the *aramatruni-nipungari*,[72] so that, at its conclusion, the spirit of old *Makapini* would travel happily to her future home. 765 [775]

The pattern of this ceremony differed somewhat from that of *Waniamperi*. At a *milimika* near the camp of the ceremonial leader, *Malumerinita*, the Melville Island aborigines held five *ilanias* over a period of eight days. The final two days of the *pukamuni* were held among the poles.[73] I will describe a typical *ilania* and later the final *pukamuni* rituals.

The *ilania* opened with one of the "workers", who had been in the forest cutting the burial poles, running toward the *milimika*, stick in hand, giving the honey call. One of the *pukamuni* men rushed out to drive him away, but, after a sham fight with throwing sticks, brought him into the *milimika*.

The predominating songs and dances of this and other *ilanias* of *Makapini* were associated with the mythical wild-honey people[74] of Bathurst Island. 765 533 535

[71] Hart (1930, pp. 280–99) describes how the custom of altering the names of near relatives at death causes rapid changes in the language.

[72] This type of *pukamuni* ceremony is also held when aborigines are drowned at sea and their bodies not recovered. [766]

[73] This was a variation of the previous *pukamuni*, probably because the body was not at the place of ceremony.

[74] Although I did not inquire, it is certain from the songs, that the father or mother of the dead woman belonged to one of the honey totems of Bathurst Island.

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765 Many of them referred to "creation times" when *Tukimlini*, of Muruplanga
● 533 told the honey people of Bathurst Island to be the *pukamuni* men and women
[535] at the burial rituals of *Purukupali* (p. 30).

The following is a selection of the honey songs—

[539] "Let all the men who are *mandalini* (a eucalyptus flower, particularly rich in honey) come to this place (Tapararimi) and dance for the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*."

"With all your ornaments, start walking (to Tapararimi)."

"Bring all your ceremonial ornaments to our place (Tapararimi) where we will hold a big ceremony."

Another man chanted a lengthy song describing the death of *Purukupali*, and another, which instructed the performers, at the conclusion of the rituals, to take the cane rings, *jairinis* (Pl. 31H) from their arms and leave them on the grave.

The songs and dances about *Purukupali*, the honey people of Bathurst Island, and their doings at the first *pukamuni*, were followed by another series which related specifically to the collecting of wild honey. In all these
[535] performances, the men carried out the honey dance with high knee action, their hands held above their heads and their fingers pointing upward (Pl. 30D).

One man sang about a fly that lives in the hives of wild bees and about a large hive in a tree with a long snout (entrance) and much honey. Then, accompanied by several others, he mimed the action of bees flying in and out of a hive; the aborigines locating the hive, climbing the tree, cutting off the limb containing the hive, and eating the honey. These dances were followed by the ceremonial leader, *Malumerinita*, calling out the totemic places of honey, most of them on Bathurst Island. As each name was called, the assembled aborigines shouted "*wia*".

A young man started to sing about a pearling lugger, but was told by old *Tjamalampua* to stop and use only the *palaneri* songs. The same man then
[535] danced the actions of the jabiru, *Tjalati*, to the appropriate song (p. 75), and one relating to the buffalo,[78] to the accompaniment of "*Prr, prr, papringipali*" (go away big eye, prr, prr), then a song of *Aruni*, the poison fish: "*Aruni aruni, drr, drr, drr*", which referred to the sinking of a boat, the *W'anganui*, off south-western Bathurst Island.[79]

[825] [78] The aborigines believe that the buffalo, brought to Fort Dundas in 1824, belong to the *palaneri* (creation) period.

[79] The *aruni* is a spiny poisonous fish (possibly the stone fish), which was supposed to have sunk the *W'anganui* by driving its spines through the ship's bottom. The *drr, drr*, of the song represents the sounds of the spines as they were driven into the ship.

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765 (*c*) The payment of the "workers".
(*d*) The erecting of the poles.
(*e*) The final mourning rituals.

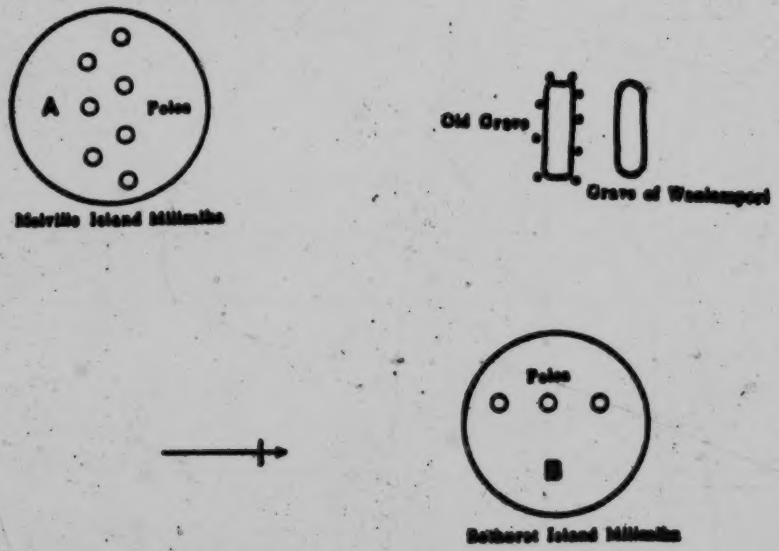

FIG. 4. *Ceremonial Ground, Waniamperi's Pukamuni*

(*a*) *The Opening Rituals*

Early on the first morning, the men, women and children left the main camp and travelled to a temporary ceremonial ground, in the forest, about three hundred yards east of the grave.

The Melville Island group, under *Wurarbuti*, assembled straightaway and performed a small *ilania*, in which some of the men, after the usual honey and mosquito calls, started to chant the rain song of *Tomituka*, whilst others [533] either lit a fire and crouched over it, or sheltered under pandanus trees, shivering as if wet and cold.

As the song changed to the *impok, impok*, of the frog-woman, several men [535] and the woman, *Prupadau*, hopped around the *milimika* in imitation of a frog (Pl. 29D).

When the Melville Islanders dispersed to paint themselves, the Bathurst Island men, under *Jibungliaiumi*, performed another *ilania* on the same spot.

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The leader started a song describing a fight in which the dead man, *Waniamperi*, had taken part. To this refrain, the performers mimed the action of men struggling together, beating each other with throwing sticks, or casting spears.

In the middle of this performance, *Katopi*, the son of the dead man, rushed into the forest beating himself with a throwing stick, followed by his step-mother, *Dominao*, who forcibly disarmed him. At the conclusion of the dance, and when quiet was restored, *Nilituma* carried out the same jabiru dance we had seen at the Bathurst Island *ilania* a few days previously (Pl. 29A). At the conclusion of the jabiru dance the Bathurst Islanders retired to paint themselves for the final rituals. In general, the "workers" painted the leading *pukamuni* men, some husbands painted their wives, their children and themselves.

In the late afternoon, the assembled men, women and children, their faces and bodies painted with the most elaborate designs, and decorated with colourful *pukamuni* ornaments (frontispiece), made their way along the road, calling continuously in the high-pitched mosquito call until within a hundred yards of the grave. At that point the two groups separated. Each group lit a fire and carried out, first the rite of *wandiatapinda*, followed by a basket dance (later to be performed at the grave side (Pl. 26C), then went to their respective *milimikas* (Fig. 4A, B).

Pausing only to assemble at those places, both groups of people rushed across the open space and threw themselves on the bushes covering the grave, wailing heart-brokenly. *Katopi*, the son of the dead man, who fell on the belongings of his father at the base of a tree (Pl. 24D), tried to cut his head with a knife, but was restrained, as before, by his step-mother, *Dominao*, who led him back to the Bathurst Island *milimika*. This was a signal for everyone to return to their respective *milimikas* and perform the first of a series of dances.

In the Bathurst Island circle, *Nangrinini* danced a canoe dance, paddling and bailing a miniature bark canoe as he pushed it along the ground.

As the Melville Island group were chanting their songs, five men sneaked up to the grave, one of their number peered among the bushes, crawled back to his crouching companions and whispered something to them. At this they all called out loudly, ran back into their *milimika* and carried out a vigorous, almost hysterical dance.

The same performance was repeated, but on the second occasion *Marawani*, one of the chief mourners, ran to the grave, speared it in several places,

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765 then, with the group, returned quietly to their companions among the poles."

(b) The Songs and Dances[78]

On the return to *milimika* A (Fig. 4), *Wurarbuti* and his wife mimed, to the accompaniment of appropriate songs, paddling a canoe, with their hands around one of the poles. This was followed by a man and his wife, who acted, [396] with considerable detail, the making of a bark canoe; stripping the bark from the tree; holding the bark over a fire to make it flexible; folding the bark and sewing the ends together, and the final launching.

By the time this act was over, it was dark. The aborigines from both *milimikas* retired to the nearby forest, lit their fires and cooked their food. There were no ceremonies during the evening, except, occasionally, some woman left her camp and wailed among the deserted *pukamuni* poles.

533 About 8 o'clock on the morning of the last day, the *pukamuni* men opened
539 the ceremonies with the honey and mosquito calls. These calls were followed
765 by a number of songs, chanted by *Wurarbuti* and some of his companions, which referred to the mythical boobook owl-man, *Purujikini*, and the instructions he gave to his fellow performers at the first *kulama* ceremony (p. 123). They were:

"Make the *milimika* large and clean for many people and when it is ready, sing first, then dance round the ring."

"You will paint yourself beside the *milimika*."

"When you decorate yourself for the *kulama*, put white on one side of your face, yellow on the other, and red down the middle of your hair. And as you dance, your wives will help you, as my wife, *Pintoma*, the owl-woman, once did for me."

"You sing, *Mikinatrina*[79] (a *kulama* initiate), and we will follow."

"When you sing in a *kulama*, put the cockatoo feathers, *primitiki*, in your hair, and the wind will shake them."

While those songs were being chanted, other men mimed the appropriate action.

[78] Although the aborigines did not explain the ritual, it is likely that the first man looked for and thought he saw the *mopaditi* of *Waniamperi*. On the second occasion, *Marawani*, a near relative, hunted the dead man's spirit away. This ritual, in a modified [114] form, took place at the two other *pukamunis* we witnessed. Spencer (1928, p. 648) mentions the same ritual.

[79] The songs and dances in this series were neither traditional nor totemic. They were composed usually by a number of performers, especially for the occasion, and quite an amount of thought went into their production.

[79] During the initiation of the *Mikinatrina* at the *kulama* ceremony, he performs his first dance amid general applause.

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During this performance an old man, *Nalauri*, *Waniamperi's* brother, reprimanded, in the native tongue, a group of young aborigines for not taking a more active part in the *pukamuni* rituals.

"Don't hang around there like a mob of whites," he said. "If you're standing while there's a dance, beat your buttocks, or if you're sitting, either clap your hands or beat the ground with a stick."

At the conclusion of the Melville Island performance, the Bathurst Islanders continued the songs and dances in their own *milimika* (Fig. 42), about *Purutjikini* and the first *kulama*.

The leader, *Jibunglialumi*, chanted how, at the first *kulama*, *Purutjikini* said to his companions, "I'll give you the songs, then you'll dance about the things around you." As he did so, *Nangrinini* performed the dance of the turtle. "Then as the next song was being chanted," *Purutjikini* said, "you will cook the *kulama*." Another man picked up a *pukamuni* basket, and, calling "*krr, krr, krr*" (as they do in the *kulama* ceremonies), emptied the supposed contents on the ground in imitation of pouring out the *kulama* yams preparatory to putting them in the earth oven (p. 137). *Jibunglialumi* then followed with the dance of the owl man, *Purutjikini*, with his hands held around his eyes (Pl. 29B), ending his dance with "*Ah, oo, ah, oo*", the call of the present-day boobook owl.

The Melville and Bathurst Island groups then moved from the distant to the grave side of their burial poles (Fig. 4) and performed the *pumuti* rituals. On this occasion, however, only husbands and wives beat each other.

The *pumuti* was followed by *Urumatjina* from Melville Island, chanting a song he had composed for the occasion which described how the dead man, *Waniamperi* had become involved in a fight at a *pukamuni* ceremony.[80]

Some men, listening intently to *Urumatjina*, joined in as soon as they had learned the song, while others performed the dance miming the action of men fighting.

Another part of the same song told how a woman, *Purpurangmio* (since dead) loudly abused the men because so many of them attacked her husband at one time. To add reality to the performance, *Urumatjina* pounded the side of a *pukamuni* basket with a stick to indicate the noise made by the angry woman (Pl. 26b).

The theme of the songs then returned to the *kulama* ceremony. As some men chanted, others laid sheets of paper-bark on the ground, and to the *kulama* thunder-call they imitated the actions of rubbing the *kulama* yam on

[80] This is the same fight as the one enacted in the Bathurst Island *ilaria* on the previous day (p. 83).

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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765 their bodies (p. 138). Again, a man picked up a *pukamuni* basket, symbolized the pouring out of the cooked *kulama* yam on a sheet of bark and passed it to the *kulama* call of "*Brr, brr, brr*". This action completed the dance.

(c) The Payment of the Workers

431 765 While other dances, which I did not see, were being performed in the two *milimikas*, the *pukamuni* men and their wives unpacked the gifts for the "workers", and spread them out on the ground (Pl. 26a). There was much good-natured discussion about their equitable distribution before the presents were finally separated into lots and placed one on the top of each pole.

177 533 765 [302] *Wurarbuti*, resplendent in his body paint and coloured *pukamuni* ornaments, mounted one of the larger poles and chanted songs telling how he became possessed of the great wealth which enabled him to buy the presents for the "workers".

[539] "I am a big Government man," he boasted, "so I was able to get plenty of money."

"I stole the money from the Government to pay for the presents and the police locked me up."

[535] While *Wurarbuti* chanted this song, *Marawani* and the women danced with their hands crossed as if in handcuffs.

As the song continued, *Marawani* ran after *Pulanimbuwi*, dragged him into the *milimika*, and struggled with him in imitation of a policeman making an arrest.

Other songs were chanted ridiculing a Government clerk at Darwin, while one of them "wrote" out an order, passed the "money" to a *pukamuni* man through a window (an opening in a pole) and then demanded, in a loud domineering voice, his thumb-print on a scrap of paper as a receipt.

177 431 765 *Wurarbuti*, still seated on the top of a pole, started to distribute the presents, imitating, as he did so, the actions and broken English which the same clerk used when dealing with aborigines.

"You a worker," said *Wurarbuti*. "Have you a wife? How many children? You work for me, make proper good pole, I pay you."

The "worker" on accepting his payment, put his thumb-print on a scrap of paper (initialled—with a twig—by another *pukamuni* man), and walked away satisfied[81] with his square of printed calico, pipes and tobacco. As each "worker" received his gift the *pukamuni* men performed a dance.

[81] This is not always so. Sometimes a "worker" becomes so annoyed over inadequate payment that he will not allow his pole to be carried to the grave, preferring to let it rot in the forest. On several occasions we saw a pole which had been left in the forest because its maker was dissatisfied with the payment.

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The ceremony opened with the honey call, then, as the men stepped across a fire lit in the centre of the *milimika* (Pl. 24a), a long sustained mosquito call. Following this, the men formed a circle around the fire, and chanted a song which described the bombing of a ship off the coast of Bathurst Island.

Close female relatives, standing in a line facing the poles, sang the *amburu*, while three men, painted white, each carrying a spear, rushed toward the screen of boughs, peered through them, then returned to the *milimika*. Three other men were given spears, one of whom, with a *tokwianga* (goose-feather ball) in his mouth, took a stand as if to throw a spear at the poles, remarking to his companions as he did so, that he was about to spear a *mopaditi*.

As soon as the "workers" removed the boughs which shielded the poles from view, an old woman, *Jilandaui*, ran forward and beat the ground near the poles, while the six men, with spears poised ready, followed and stabbed around the base of the poles. These rituals, the signal for all the participants to rush to the grave poles and (Pl. 27a) mourn, were carried out to frighten the *mopaditis* from the vicinity of the grave.

A young man with his head and shoulders through an opening in one of the poles, and his arm around an old woman, sobbed bitterly (Pl. 27c) while others stood around either crying or singing the *amburu*.

As the sounds of grief became less, a young man, miming a killing which had taken place some time ago, sneaked up with great stealth, and "speared" *Tjamalampua* who was lying on the ground in the *milimika*.[86] Shortly afterwards the ceremony closed with the usual honey and mosquito calls.

(*b*) *Songs and Dances*

The next morning about 10 a.m., the ceremonies started afresh. On this occasion, all of the songs and dances dealt with secular incidents; a crocodile creeping upon a man to kill him, an aboriginal sailing a European racing boat, another paddling a bark canoe, still another spearing an enemy, and so on.

Several of the aborigines created much laughter by miming the actions of our physical anthropologist, Dr. Carleton Coon, who had just completed a series of body measurements and observations on the Melville Islanders.

One man, using a short stick, measured the arms, legs and body of old *Tjamalampua* as he lay stretched out full length on the ground; he then danced around the *milimika* with his hands round his head, in imitation of the head callipers; another mimed Dr. Coon weighing an aboriginal, cutting his hair and looking at his teeth.

[86] Spencer, 1928, p. 651, describes a similar episode. No doubt the spearing of Tjamalampua had a much deeper symbolism than appeared at the time.

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765 533 *Wurarkuti* described, in song and dance, how some aborigines from the northern end of the island had tried to kill his father, but the father, being forewarned, had run into the mangrove swamp for shelter. A spear, however, thrown by his enemies, hit him in the side but did not kill him.

[535] [177] Then followed a long series of songs and dances, made up by *Wurarkuti*, describing how the mechanics from Darwin erected a large steel tank at the nearby settlement. To the chanting of songs and beating of buttocks, the actors "rolled" the tank (actually a small log) along the ground, tilted it on one end, rigged blocks and tackle and lifted the "tank" in place. These dances lasted about a half an hour.

Toward the end of this performance, which finished about mid-day, a woman, *Narlaui*, painted entirely in white, and carrying a throwing stick, called upon the dead woman to fight her because, at one time she, *Narlaui*, had reprimanded her for running after men. The aborigines applauded her when she had finished her song. Emboldened by this, *Narlaui* stood in front of one of the poles and challenged the dead woman to a fight.

[535] [177] The ceremony finished[97] with an aeroplane dance, the men posturing in a similar manner to that of the *Jirakati* dance (Pl. 30j).

About sunset, the rituals started afresh with the usual honey and mosquito calls.

Pulanimbwi and *Muramajua*, acting the part of little children, struggled with each other in the dust of the *milimika* while one of them sang,

[539] "You can't drink from the same breast as I can because we have different mothers."

Old *Malumerinita*, taking up the same refrain, pushed the two "children" aside as he sang,

[539] "I'm a big man, so I'll drink the milk."

(c) *The Payment of the Workers*

765 It was after dark before the three "workers", who had cut and painted the burial poles, received their payment (Pl. 27D). As each *pukamuni* man passed the goods, loin cloths, and tobacco to the "worker", he cut his head with a [535] knife, and started a dance in which even a number of little girls took part (Pl. 25A). They had been told by some of the older women what to do, so [868] that the youngsters would be conversant with the woman's place in the rituals.

[97] This ceremony would have probably, like that of *Waniampuri*, finished at mid-day had not the Superintendent of the settlement insisted on sending the chief woman mourner to a distant locality from which she had been unable to return on time.

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(d) The Final Mourning Rituals

By this time the chief woman mourner, painted entirely in red, had arrived. On reaching the ceremonial ground, she charged against a pole, then leaned over it, crying heartbrokenly. Another woman, *Dominao*, in paroxysms of grief, threw herself on the ground at the base of another pole, while still another woman, dancing the *amburi* before the third pole, told the *mopaditi* of the dead woman, in a song "to keep away from me".

The ceremony finished, like that of *Waniamperi's pukamuni*, with concerted wailing around the poles.

(3) *The Pukamuni of Inbidjarmeri's Infant*

This simplified *pukamuni* was held for a premature child of *Inbidjarmeri*. The child died, about a month previously, at the Darwin hospital. The complete rituals, though curtailed, having occupied only two hours, followed the normal pattern with two exceptions. The *pukamuni* group did not employ any "workers" to cut the burial poles, and, as the body had not been brought to Melville Island, the ceremonies were held at the grave of a young child, of the same parents, who had died about two years previously.

A distant relative, appointed by the father of a "worker" had burnt the grass, cleared a space adjacent to the grave as a dancing ground and draped a turtle rope around the old poles in which had been twisted the wing feathers of geese.[88] For these duties he was given two loin cloths.

There were no dances at the first *ilania* which took place about three hundred yards from the burial site, only prolonged honey and mosquito calls.

The *pukamuni* group then moved to within a hundred yards of the grave where, after more honey and mosquito calls, they lit the *wandiatapinda* fire, and walked through its smoke and flames.

At the commencement of the final rituals, most of the group halted behind a rope, stretched between two trees, over which the "worker" had hung bagging and blankets;[89] but others rushed forward, spears in hand, and, as in the two previous *pukamunis*, stabbed at the base of the poles surrounding the grave to drive away the *mopaditis*.

After this, everyone moved to the grave-side of the screen, the men carrying out a series of dances while the women, beating themselves with sticks, leaned on the *pukamuni* poles and mourned.

While some of the *pukamuni* men chanted a song about the red-fruited eugenia, *binamia*, *Muramajua*, walking around the *milimika*, imitated a

[88] I did not find out the significance of this custom.
[89] This took the place of the screen of boughs used in the normal rituals.

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533 woman picking up the fruit and putting it in a bark basket. Then, bending
535 over, as if carrying a heavy load, he danced around the *milimika* to the
766 rhythm of the song and the beating sticks.

The rituals continued by the *pukamuni* men chanting a series of songs, first
[177] about a boat, then its propeller, its sails and, finally, about the raising of its anchor. During the chanting, one or more aborigines, dancing to the rhythm of the songs, mimed the relevant actions.

766 These dances being finished, the participants of the *pukamuni*, putting their arms around the posts, cried the *amburu*, the mourning song; the men gave the honey and mosquito call, and the burial rituals were over.[90]

6. THE FACIAL DECORATIONS

302 The facial and body decorations of the men and women of the Tiwi, particularly those used during the final *pukamuni* rituals are, by far, the most colourful and elaborate of those used by any Australian aboriginal tribe.

During the early days of the century these decorations attracted the atten-
[114] tion of Basedow (1913, pp. 291–321); Klaatsch (1907, p. 589), and Spencer (1928, p. 669), although nobody, of more recent years, has shown any interest in them.

Although there is little doubt that the desire for artistic expression and
[775] personal beautification are factors behind this practice,[91] the fundamental idea
[517] is that of camouflage, i.e., that the designs will so conceal the identity of the men and women taking part in the ceremony, that the *mopaditis*, who are present at both the *pukamuni* and *kulama*, will not recognize them.

So at both the *ilanias* and the final rituals of the *pukamuni*, everyone, even the little children who look on, is decorated. At the *ilanias*, however, which are performed every evening for some weeks, the decorations are usually simple and often crudely applied. Nevertheless, the aborigines, believing the
[775] *mopaditis* to be stupid folk and easily misled, consider these simple decorations are an adequate safeguard.[92]

Pl. 28 illustrates a number of facial designs. Most of the originals of these
[126] illustrations are colour photographs. Some, however, are based on crayon drawings[93] which my informants made to show the designs they would use for certain totems.

[90] See p. 61 for beliefs in the *mopaditis* of a small child.

[832] [91] The men claimed that when their face and body decorations were good, the women were attracted to them.

[92] Mountford, 1956, p. 437, illustrates a small child decorated at an *ilania*.

[93] The illustrations based on crayon drawings are, Pl. 28A, B, C, D.

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773 881 of the *kulama* ceremony, became the boobook owl, his wife, *Pinauma*, the barn owl, *Jurumu*, the wedge-tailed eagle, *Jirakui*, the white-headed sea-eagle, *Tupaupini*, a small owl, and so on.

(2) *The Second Kulama Ceremony*

After the close of *palaneri* times, the *Ningauis*, a spirit people, who had been present at the first *kulama*, performed a second ceremony on the same island, Turiturina, as was used by *Purutjiktini* during the creation period. On the second occasion, the *Ningauis* carried out the complete *kulama*, which included not only the preparation of the poisonous *kulama* yam for food, but also the performance of all the grades of initiation from that of the *Marukumuni* to the *Mikingula*.

At its completion, the *Ningauis* decreed that the form of the ceremony with its proceeding and initiation rituals, should always be the same. The [759] aborigines believe that if this form is altered, a mysterious sickness, called *tsini* will punish them by making everyone ill.

(3) *The Myth of the Ningauis*

After the second *kulama*, the *Ningauis* made their home in the mangrove swamps of a small island, Imaluna, near Cape Helvetius, south-western Bathurst Island (Fig. 1).

776 The *Ningauis* are somewhat like the present-day aborigines, except that they are small people, about two feet high, with long hair and very short feet, their footmarks resembling those of an oversized dog. The aborigines often see these tracks on the edge of the mangrove swamps of Imaluna (Pl. 22c).

Should an aboriginal, when hunting through the swamps, go too near a home of the *Ningauis*, one of the *Ningauis* by calling, "Eeh", would cause the whole place to be suddenly enveloped in complete darkness. The native could bring the light back again by striking the trunk of a mangrove tree with a stick, but, in the meantime, the *Ningauis*, by taking advantage of the darkness, would have sneaked away. Therefore, no aboriginal has seen a *Ningaui* even though they are often heard in the mangrove swamps calling "Eeh, eeh", to each other.

When the *Ningauis* chant their songs after dark, the mangrove swamps become as brightly lit as in the day-time. There are stories of how aboriginal hunters, lured by the songs and the light, have wandered among the tangled mangroves to see what was going on, but as soon as the *Ningauis* heard the intruders, they finished their song with the word "Eeh",[10] which made the

● [533] [10] The *Ningaui* songs chanted by *Jikungkaluni*, as one of the *ilanies* of *Wuriumpari* (p. 74), all ended with a long drawn-out "Eeh".

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chanting *kulama* songs. Later, the decorated initiate, now called a *Marukumuni*, is taken to the camp of the man who captured him. It is the duty of this man, now his guardian, to provide the initiate with food. However, he must not be given snakes, for such food would cause his joints to swell and become painful. 881

The guardian takes the food he has collected to the *Marukumuni*'s wife who feeds her husband over a period of four days in the same manner as a *pukamuni* man is fed (Pl. 24A). Neither she, nor any of the food he eats must touch the initiate's body. The food left over from the meal is wrapped in paper-bark and burnt. After four days this taboo is lifted and the *Marukumuni* is free to hunt for and eat all foods, except snake.

(2) *The Eating of the Cycad Fruit*

About August, when the fruit of the cycad (*Cycas media*) is ripe, the *Marukumuni* is decorated with a new design (Pl. 42B). At the same time the leader of the *kulama* ceremony instructs the women of the camp to collect and prepare a considerable quantity of the cycad fruit. As the fruit in its raw state is highly poisonous, it has to be shelled, pounded out flat, and soaked in running water for three days before it is edible. When the fruit is ready for eating, the women, putting it in a number of bark baskets, stand them on either side of a log (Pl. 43D). [302] [252]

Then, while the women walk around the baskets, chanting the songs of the *kulama*, two *Mikingulas* wash the design (Pl. 42B), from the *Marukumuni's* body, and decorate him with a new one (Pl. 42C). This, he must renew continuously until he hears the first sounds of thunder (about mid-November). [533] [302]

As soon as these decorations are completed a member of each family picks up a basket, takes it to their camp, and all have a meal.

The *Marukumuni* initiate, however, is fed by his wife from a separate store of cycad fruit.

At the same time as the *kulama* leader sent the women of the camp to collect and prepare the cycad fruit for the *Marukumuni* rituals, he instructed the women of the *Kilipaniatinga* grade to do the same. However, when the other women of the camp placed their baskets of prepared food beside the log, the *Kilipaniatinga* women poured their cycad fruit on a nearby pad of grass, pushed four sticks into the ground around the heap and seated themselves on the outside.

The ceremonial activity then centred around the men and women of the *Kilipaniati* grade of initiation, who, from the previous *kulama* until then, 301 881

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88 | ill. The *Marukumunis* were fed behind their bark shelter and the *Wadjeniatis* in the open camp.

(a) *The Opening Rituals*

After dark, on the day following the ceremonial eating of the edible yam, the fully initiated *kulama* men, and all people above the grade of *Mikinatrina*, prepared for the opening ceremony by clearing an oval about fourteen feet long and six feet wide. The *Marukumuni* initiates were brought from their hiding place, the *Wadjeniatis* from their camp and both were seated just outside the ceremonial ground. Neither of those grades, however, took part in the opening rituals.

[372] [753] In the middle of the ceremonial ground were two smouldering logs, but no flames, for fear of attracting *taini*, the *kulama* sickness. Among the trees outside of the ring, were a number of families of uninitiated men, women and children.

Normally the *kulama* party would have been made up of *Mikinaras*, *Mikiaterimas* and *Mikingulas*, and the songs chanted by the men in that order.

177 533 881 539 On the occasion of our visit the ceremony opened when a *Mikingula*, *Wurarbuti*, seated on the ground, beating his throwing sticks, started to hum a song softly. Becoming more confident, he stood up, and pacing backward and forward still beating his sticks, chanted the following three songs.[88]

(*a*) "My father was king, therefore I am the Prince of Wales. As King George was King, so was the old man on the hill, my (dead) father. I will have warships, money and a flag of red and white." When the singer mentioned his dead father there was a high-pitched wail among the near relatives.

(*b*) The second song dealt with the invitation he had received to dance before the Queen of England. "When the Queen was in England, she said 'I would like to see a black-fellow dance', and so I went up. King Philip watched me a lot while I danced."

(*c*) "My uncle in Darwin said to me 'Why haven't you made a lot of *pukamuni* arm rings. If you don't soon do so, you'll cause a lot of trouble among the *pukamuni* people."

Muramajua also chanted three songs;

(*a*) In the first, of which I did not collect the words, he explained, at length,

[88] This man, who was the ceremonial leader of the *pukamuni* ceremony, described earlier, had been invited, only a few months previously, to visit the southern States, and dance before the Queen of England. Naturally, this left such a strong impression on his mind that many of his songs dealt with that remarkable experience.

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how a slow canoe journey had made him late for a recent *pukamani* ceremony.

(*b*) "I was sick in the Darwin hospital. Sister Philips said it was because I had had too much grog."

(*c*) "There was a man at Cockle Point (opposite the Bathurst Island Mission), who wanted to kill me with a spear. So I changed myself into a mullet and he didn't see me."

Another singer chanted,

(*a*) "I am a goose and a man cast his throwing stick and hit me."

(*b*) "I want that girl from Bathurst Island to wash her with fresh water to make it square for giving away my sister."[86]

Another *Mikingula*, *Palitara*, aired his differences with a woman, *Batali*, in the following song.

(*a*) "I fed *Batali*, but she did not give her daughter to me as a wife."[87]

(3) *Collecting the Kulama Yam*

Early on the following morning, the *Mikinatrinas*, *Mikintaras*, the *Mikiatarimas* and *Mikingulas*, went to the ceremonial ground of the previous evening. They first dipped their hands in a bark container filled with water, throwing some over their bodies; then, taking a mouthful, they squirted water into the air in imitation of rain, afterwards calling out "Oom-oom", to symbolize thunderstorms. Taking two small sticks, one in each hand, the men used them to clean the wax from their ears, afterwards standing the sticks upright in the ground.[88]

Placing their palms on a sheet of bark covered with white paint, the men patted their hair, chest, wrists and pubes (Pl. 44c), turning toward the north as they again called out "Oom-oom", in imitation of thunder.

Following this ritual, each *kulama* man painted another with a design in white (Pl. 42a). The leader then picked up the bark basket, held it on his arm, and facing north, south, east and west, again called "Oom-oom", while he made a drum-like sound, symbolical of thunder, by hitting the basket with his hand. After this the men set out to collect the *kulama* yams. They were

[86] I did not find out the significance of this ritual.

[87] When a woman promises her daughter to a man, it is the duty of the future son-in-law to give her continuous presents of food. On this occasion, the woman had accepted *Palitara's* gifts, but when her daughter was old enough, she gave the girl to another man.

Quarrelling at a *kulama* ceremony is forbidden, otherwise *taini*, the *kulama* sickness, will destroy all the participants. This prohibition allows an aboriginal, such as *Palitara*, to air his grievance without causing a quarrel, even though, as on this occasion, the defaulting person was present.

[88] The meaning of this ritual is obscure. According to the aborigines it prevents trouble and quarrelling during the *kulama* rituals.

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Dry sticks, about three feet in length, were pushed upright into the ground around the *tumerapi* (oven), kindling wood was laid between them, other pieces of dried wood piled cross-wise between the uprights until there was a stack about three feet high (Pl. 45A). 881 [372]

(5) *Placing the Uncooked Yams in Water*

About sunset, the *kulama* men went to the bloodwood tree, the *wuringalota*, where the *Mikinatrinas* had stored the yams in the morning and, on pulling bushes away, revealed some of the male and female *Marukumuni* initiates squatting, holding in their arms a basket of the uncooked *kulama* yams. The *Marukumuni* initiates took the yams to the water, everyone assisting in laying them on a pad of grass in the bed of the stream (Pl. 46B).

Immediately this task was completed, the *kulama* men pushed the *Marukumuni* initiates over,[86] and, holding them by the legs and arms dragged them backward and forward through the now muddy water to wash off their body paint. They were then taken back to camp, seated beside the *milimika* and painted with a different pattern (Pl. 42F). Neither the *Marukumuni* nor the *Wadjeniati* initiates took any further part in the rituals of that day. When, after dark, the *kulama* men entered the *milimika* to chant another series of songs, the camp fires were allowed to burn brightly, because the aborigines said that the yams, being in the water, were now "quiet" so that there was no fear of *taini*, the spirit of *kulama* sickness. [302]

The chanting men walked counter-clockwise around the *milimika* because *Purutjikini* did so at the first *kulama*. To have walked in the opposite direction, even then, would have made the spirit of the *kulama* yam angry. 881

The following are literal translations of a selection of the songs. 533 ●

(*a*) "I had a quarrel with Tom Crow, the Superintendent of Snake Bay Settlement." 539 [177]

(*b*) "My mother-in-law is good to me, she did not take away my promised wife."

(*c*) "The fruit of the *binamia* (*Eugenia* sp.) ripens and falls to the ground."

(*d*) "The little *Pitipituis* (spirit children) are dancing on the beach."

[86] Spencer, 1928, p. 664, describing a similar ritual, states, "Several old men seized the *Wapinyerri* (my *Wadjeniati*), and plunged into the water with him. As many as could get near him gripped him by the legs and arms, and yelling, splashing and churning up the mud, . . . dragged him backward and forward several times, . . . As soon as the *Wapinyerri* were released, the men turned their attention to the *Marukumuni* boys. . . ." Although my informants did not say so it is likely that the *Wadjeniati* initiates were also pushed into the water to remove their body paint in readiness for the second design of a *Mikinatrina* (Pl. 42J). [114]

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533 539 881 (e) "The salt water (sea), brings plenty of drift-wood up on the beach for our fires."

(f) "The *nukwali* (shark) killed a stingray."

(g) "The boat sails fast and the waves are beating its sides."

At approximately 8.30 p.m. the chanting ceased and the aborigines retired to their camps.

(6) *The Lighting of the Ceremonial Fire*

[137] About 6.30 the next morning, the *Mikinatrininga* women collected pieces of termite mound and put them on the top of the sticks for the fire which had been piled over the oven, the *tumarapi*. This fire could be lit by any man above the grade of *Mikinatrina*. Whilst the fire was burning down, the *Mikingulas* walked around it, and sang a few *kulama* songs, only one of which was recorded.

[177] (i) "When I see the shining iron of the new schoolhouse, I think how my children will go to school and wear boots."[81]

881 By 9.30 a.m. after everyone had had a meal, most of the aborigines, including several children, painted themselves in red and made their way to the swamp to take part in the ritual of bringing the *kulama* yams from the water, to the *milimika*.

On reaching the swamp, the leader took the yams from the pad of grass under the water, placed them carefully in the basket, with a bundle of rushes plucked from a nearby swamp on top, then, putting the basket on his shoulder, carried it to the *milimika* and stood it beside the fire "to warm up the yams".

881 533 539 The *Mikingulas*, walking anti-clockwise as before, chanted another series of songs.

[177] (a) "I went to Native Affairs (Darwin), drew out £10 (with which to gamble) and bought a pack of playing cards."[82]

Striding around the ring with two spears in one hand and a throwing stick in the other, the same man sang.

(b) "I have many spears. If the white people were not here, I would kill you all."

881 765 At the end of the song, the performer called out the name of his dead father, striking himself on the head with his throwing stick to indicate his sorrow. The people on the outside of the ring cried in sympathy.

[185] [81] A parent's hope in a changing society that his children will live at a higher social level that the one which he himself occupies.

[82] A number of the younger Melville Islanders work for extended terms in Darwin, periodically returning to their homeland to take part in the ceremonies.

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After a pause, another aboriginal entered the ring and sang about the previous singer's dead father.

(*e*) "My stomach gets hot like fire,[83] when I think of you, my uncle." Some of the women cried when the song was finished.

(7) *Cooking the Kulama Yam*

When the fire had burnt down to a bed of coals, the men picked up the fragments of burning wood, throwing them in all directions, scraped out the glowing embers with sticks, brushed the ashes from the heated termite mound with boughs, and the oven was ready for cooking the *kulama* yams. Meanwhile, one of the men had bound the rushes into a rope, *imbini*, about an inch in diameter, and sufficiently long to encircle the oven. The fragments of heated termite mound were lightly sprinkled with water, the *imbini* rope coiled around them, the yams carefully arranged on top and the whole covered first with thin sheets of newly split paper-bark, then with sand. Care was taken to cover the yams properly, otherwise, the aborigines explained, *saini*, the *kulama* sickness, would escape and cause blindness to the immediate participants.

As the oven was being covered, the leader patted the sand to consolidate it (Pl. 442), chanting at the same time, "Brr, Brr, Goodbye, Grandmother, goodbye",[84] in the same way as the owl-man, *Purutjikini*, did at the first *kulama*.

While the yams were being cooked, the *kulama* people performed the following dances, to the rhythm of sticks beaten by the women.

(*a*) The dance of *jiriwa* (silver-crowned friar-bird).

(*b*) Two crocodiles, *jirakupai*, fighting (Pl. 308), followed by two aborigines as crocodiles crawling in the sand.

(*c*) A crocodile; the dancer carrying the goose-feather ball (*tokwianga*) in his mouth to symbolize the prey of the crocodile.

(*d*) The green turtle with the hands and arms of the dancer moving in imitation of the turtle's flippers.

Two young women, when asked to dance, performed:

(*e*) The crocodile, *jirakupai*,

(*f*) The buffalo,

(*g*) The shark (Pl. 300).

[83] The stomach, or solar-plexus, is the location of the *imunta* (spirit), and the seat of the emotions.

[84] The *kulama* yam is looked upon as a female when it is dug up, placed beside the *wuringalata* tree and immersed in the water for the first time. When taken from the swamp it is male, again becoming female from the time it is put in the oven until it is eaten.

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(8) *Cutting up the Yams*

881 252 After the yams had been in the oven for about one and a half hours, the men gathered around the oven, felt it, and, after a short discussion began to scrape the warm sand away from the paper-bark covering. As they did so, they pressed handfuls of the warm sand against their elbows, chest, shoulders and knees, believing that this sand made their joints strong and supple (Pl. 45c).

881 When the paper-bark, carefully removed strip by strip, exposed the cooked yams, the women, who had been quietly standing on the outside of the *milimika* murmured reverently, "Ah, *kulama*, ah, *kulama*." Taking the hot yams from the oven each man held them against his chest, and his [827] head. This they said would give them added strength and vitality. The women although they did not participate in this ritual, sent their children into the *milimika* to have the yams pressed against their bodies so that they would grow to healthy and strong adults.

[177] [533] As the men peeled the yams, exposing the soft, yellow flesh, they sang about preparing and eating various kinds of food belonging to the white man,[88] "cutting bread for a meal, carving steak from a bullock and roasting it on the coals, cooking the tongue of a bullock, eating corn beef", and so on. When all the yams were peeled they were left on a sheet of bark whilst [412] [177] everyone had a meal and a sleep. In the late afternoon the *kulama* men started to slice the yams (cockle shells, *irakapi*, were used before the advent of steel). As they did so, the men mashed up some of the sliced *kulama* between the palms of the hands, mixed this with red ochre, and each rubbed it on his hair, face, whiskers and body. This, they believed, aided by the earlier rituals, would ensure them good health until the next *kulama*.

(9) *Initiation of the Kilipaniatis and Mikinatrinas*

The sliced yams were put in the basket, and stood in the centre of the *milimika*. A *kulama* man walked into the forest, and collected a length of flexible vine. Returning to the *milimika* he bent the vine round the necks of the male *Marukumunis* and the female *Marukumuningas* in such a way that it could not be removed. These initiates were then *Kilipaniatis* and *Kilipan-* [301] *iatingas* respectively. This neck ornament, which had a number of cords hanging from it, is called a *mariguani* (Pl. 42b). After these initiates had been further decorated with bark armlets, *tjunguts*[89] (Pl. 42D and c), and cane

[88] No doubt, in times past, they sang about abundant supplies of their own favourite foods.

[89] Spencer, 1928, illustrates the bark armlets, *tjunguts*, on Pl. XI and the belt, *aburini*, on Pl. IX, No. 1.

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arm rings, *jairinas* (Pl. 311H), they seated themselves outside the *milimika*, but took no part in the subsequent rituals. 881 [301]

Other fully initiated men led initiates of the *Wadjeniati* grade to the *waringalua* tree, where the yams had been stored on the second morning, told them to sit down and erected a low screen of boughs in front so that the initiates could not be seen from the *milimika*.

The *Mikingulas* first painted the bodies of the *Wadjeniati* initiates with yellow paint, then decorated them with many cane rings, *jairinas* (Pl. 311H), on their upper arms, hair-string belts, *ularimi*, around their waists and goose-feather balls, *tokwiangas* (Pl. 311B), on their necks, arms and wrists (see Pl. 423). This ritual admitted them to the grade of *Mikinatrina* and *Mikinatriningas* respectively. 881 302 [301]

After the *Wadjeniati* initiates were decorated, the senior grades of the *kulama* painted their faces, bodies, hair and beards with elaborate designs in red, yellow, black and white. In one design, peculiar to the *kulama*, the aborigines covered one side of their faces with red paint, and the other side with black,[87] the two colours being separated with a line of yellow (Pl. 421M). The men painted a complex design, usually in red and white on their hair and beards.[88] Some of the men also decorated their children.

The leader of the *kulama* then assembled everyone to see the *Mikinatrina* initiates perform their first dance, which they had been quietly practising for some time. 535 881

At a given signal, each *Mikinatrina* stood up in turn and, gaily decorated with body paint and coloured ceremonial ornaments, and holding a flat fighting club, *jurawila*, in either hand, performed his first dance. As each initiate danced, the assembled people applauded, slapping their buttocks in approbation of both the dancing and the appearance of the initiates. [201]

When the *Mikinatrinas* had finished their dance, the female initiates, the *Mikinatriningas*, similarly decorated, but without the clubs, individually performed their dances. Still painted and wearing their decorations, the male and female *Mikinatrinas* seated themselves outside of the *milimika* beside the newly created *Kilipaniatis*.

After the initiates had finished their dances, several of the *Mikingulas* entered the *milimika* and chanted another series of secular songs. [533]

[87] Spencer, 1928, p. 674, who saw a *kulama* ceremony during 1911, refers to this curious form of facial decoration.

[88] The method of colouring the hair with intricate designs is of some interest. The aboriginal, loading his fingers and thumb with wet ground-up ochre, pinched the hair, instead of rubbing the colour into it. By this means, the operator was able to keep sharp well-defined edges to the design, an effect that could not be achieved in any other way.

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177 *Wurarkui* described some of his experiences when he visited Brisbane to
● 533 dance before the Queen of England.
539 (*a*) "I saw the big boat, Marella, beside the jetty at Brisbane, many motor
881 cars, boats and trains. The boats went under a big bridge over the river, and across that bridge went the motor cars. The ship's flags were flying."

Another man sang.

(*b*) "The *tapalingus* (stars) are like those on the American flag in Darwin. They lifted the flag up in the morning, and let it down at night."

(*c*) "The *taduwali* (shark) swims about the sea looking for stingrays."

[535] The onlookers applauded this song and asked the singer to perform the shark dance (Pl. 300), which he did to the delight of all.

(*d*) "I am a wireless man, and have sent native tucker (food) all over Australia. The Native Affairs branch in Darwin listened in."

(*e*) "Leo Hickey's boat comes quickly to Snake Bay with a cargo of food from Darwin."

Another *Mikingula* chanted a lengthy song describing the making of a wooden canoe, the felling of a tree in the jungle, the length and shape of the craft and the final launching.

After these songs, the *kulama* men rested in the shade, and the initiates sat by the side of the *milimika*, until about sunset.

(10) *Taking the Cooked Yams to Water*

881 The *Mikingulas*, starting from equally spaced positions on the periphery, crawled toward the basket of cooked and sliced yams standing in the centre of the *milimika*, and pretended to fight over it. While this was going on, the women, beating sticks together, called out "Brr-brr", as did the owl-man, *Purutjikini*, at the first *kulama*. Meanwhile two of the *Mikingulas* vigorously [535] performed the crocodile dance (Pl. 301). Then with a loud cry, one of them picked up the basket containing the yams, and followed by most of the women and children, carried the basket to the water.

With long-drawn-out calls, and the sound "Brr-brr", the men tipped the cut-up yams from the basket on to a grass bed on the bottom of the stream. While the leader patted the surface of the water, the rest of the people called in a high trilling note, similar to the mosquito call of the *pukamani* ceremony, [821] ending up in a loud *yoi*. These calls, they said, would cause still more thunder storms and heavy rain.

533 It was quite dark (about 7.30 p.m.) when the *kulama* people assembled to
881 hear the *Mikinatrina* initiates sing for the first time. For, at this stage of the ceremony, each male initiate of the *Mikinatrina* grade was invited by the

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Mikingulas to enter the *milimika* and chant his first song, known as the *Ai-ipa*, which he had been practising for some time.[39] The female initiates, the *Mikinatrinigas* assisted the *Mikinatrinas* by beating the time on the outside of the *milimika* in the same way as *Pintoma*, the owl-woman, assisted her husband, *Purujitini*, at the first *kulama* ceremony during creation times.

One *Mikingula* told me that when he was passing through the *Mikinatrina* grade of initiation, he chanted three songs; one was about a fish, one about a rifle and a third about a crocodile.

When the *Mikinatrina* initiates had finished their songs, the men of the higher initiation grades, the *Mikinataras*, *Mikiatarimas* and the fully initiated *Mikingulas*, entered the ring, one by one, and walking anti-clockwise chanted the following songs:[40]

(*a*) "A big ship brings many things to Darwin."

(*b*) "A Japanese plane was flying low over Melville Island. The men on the ground said 'stand-by' and shot it down with a cannon."

(*c*) "In Darwin, I saw a kite, on a long string, which flew into the sky."

(*d*) "The Government plane flew me to Brisbane to see the Queen. It flew through the clouds. I went into the pilot's room in the front of the plane and the wireless told them Brisbane was only seven miles away."

(11) *The Kerarijui Songs*

About nine o'clock, the character of the songs changed and all but one dealt with the spirit, *imunka*, of their children.[41] These songs are called *kerarijui imunka*.

(*a*) "The spirits of my children have gone to Karaluka Island (Wurungku), and are playing there."

[39] At the conclusion of the *kulama* ceremony, both the male and female *Mikinatrina* initiates wear their ornaments and keep themselves decorated for a month, and every evening when seated in the camp, they chant the same *Ai-ipa* songs as they did at the *kulama* ceremony.

At the end of a month, the initiates wash the paint from their bodies, discard their ceremonial ornaments, and resume a normal life until the next *kulama*.

Two years later, the *Mikinatrina* becomes a *Mikinatara* retaining that grade for another year, when he enters the grade of a *Mikiatarima*. On the following year, the initiate reaches the full status of a *Mikingula*.

During the last two stages, i.e., *Mikinatara* and *Mikiatarima*, the initiates are not subject to any special restrictions nor do they have to pass through any special rituals. Their body decorations too, are similar to those of the fully initiated men.

[40] The men did not carry their throwing stick in the same manner as they did in the afternoon performance (Pl. 44*a*).

[41] The Melville Islanders in common with most aboriginal tribes, believe that their spirit (*imunka*) leaves the body during sleep and wanders around. The songs refer to the spirits of their children, who, during the hours of sleeping, play in the forest and on the sea-shore.

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533 (*b*) "The spirits of my children are dancing on a sand-bank beside the sea."
539 (*c*) "My children's spirits are paddling about in a canoe, looking for fish
881 and turtle eggs."

Another man first chanted a secular song, which he had tried to do earlier, but had forgotten the tune.

[177] (*d*) "I saw a tractor pulling big trees out of the ground to make the new aerodrome."

Then he continued with his *Kararitjui* song.

(*e*) "My little children have gone to the island, but they must come back because they are short of tobacco." After a pause he continued, "They're back because someone has just taken the tobacco out of my hand."

(12) *The Ceremonial Eating of the Kulama Yam*

881 On the third day, at early dawn, everybody went to the swamp to eat some of the prepared yams. The leader quietly plucked a bunch of grass from the edge of the water "to waken the *kulama* yam", for should it get a fright the yam would cause much sickness in the camp.

The fully initiated men, the *Mikingulas*, ate the first few pieces "to tame the yam", after which everyone took some to eat. This ritual ensures for all the participants, good health until the next *kulama*. Some of the prepared yam is left in the water for others to eat should they desire it.

This ritual completed the *kulama* ceremony. Everyone returned to his camp, and, except for the initiates of the lower grades, pursued a normal life. The grass ring and the pieces of antbed were left in place but the *kulama* ground and the *milimika* were deserted (Pl. 45D).

784 There are, however, a number of taboos and restrictions associated with
881 the deserted *kulama* ground and oven. For instance, should anyone make
[778] his camp or light a fire in the deserted *milimika*, the spirit of the *kulama* yam would be offended and blind the culprit.

If anyone were so foolish as to toss a piece of the antbed, from the oven, sand from the *milimika* or a fragment of cooked *kulama* yam into the sea, *Maratji*, the rainbow, would be angry and create heavy seas and storms.

[821] The aborigines of the Cape Fourcroy area were convinced that a recent hurricane, which devastated the whole area, was caused by some foolish person throwing a piece of *kulama* into the sea.

[224] On the other hand, if a *kulama* man takes a piece of antbed from the oven, and throwing it at a tree, hits the mark, his hunting will be successful, until the next *kulama* ceremony. But, if he misses his mark, his hunting will be poor.

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527 mainland, it will be remembered, are with preference postponed until after night-
535 fall. The women were not permitted to take part in the proceedings, but were,
[562] indeed, kept at some considerable distance off. Youths and male children were allowed to join in the ceremonies without apparent restriction. When we met with men, hunting in the bush, and they had been convinced of our *bona fide* intentions, they would approach us in groups of from two to four, and deliver up their long
[200] spears to us. Several of the young men would, in the meantime, run into the woods as messengers to summon others who were as yet unaware of the presence of the strangers in their haunts.

203 A corrobboree[1] having been decided upon, the signal or invitation to take part
527 in the event is sounded by two or three of the older men, who have previously arranged it among themselves. This initial note is a long-drawn, continuous yell resembling the German diphthong ö! Other members immediately fall in with the same note and are joined, at intervals, by others excitedly rushing up to take their stand alongside of those who started the call. The monosyllabic "ö" is kept continuous by the combined efforts of many voices, each of which individually expires for a moment, after the lungs' capacity for air has been completely exhausted. The note is, however, taken up again immediately after a fresh supply of air has been inhaled. The weirdness of the monotone is suddenly broken by the powerful voice of the "master" of the ceremonies, who brings forth a penetrating, but abrupt, order resembling "wahoi." This is instantly and collectively repeated by all others present. A momentary silence follows and allows the sombre trunks of the surrounding forest to reiterate the final word in ringing echoes.

The leader once more gives the note; this time in a slightly modified form resembling a long-continued "ye," that merges imperceptibly into a "yi." A sudden shrill "wahoi-hoi" brings that note also to a stop. A deadly silence prevails.

527 The primary appellation now being over, the performers congregate themselves into a compact group. In the meanwhile much excited vociferation ensues from every mouth, young as well as old. At this stage their eyes make a survey of any
[628] neighbouring encampment and if, by chance, a likely performer is noticed who has not heeded the appeal and is shirking his duty by non-attendance, he is furiously implored, at times abusively, to join the assemblage of performers. The leader now emerges from the group at a walking pace and is followed, in single file, by all participants, each in his turn falling into regular order as though his place had previously been allotted to him. The course taken by the leader is a winding one; walking, at first, some distance away from the point of starting but returning
527 eventually thereto. The musical accompaniment is started afresh, and though not
533 exactly melodious to the European ear, it is certainly a remarkably clever and original production on the part of the aboriginal. The nearest way we might describe it in words is that it is in the form of a trill, produced by a rapidly repeated

[1] Compare also H. Klaatsch, *Proc. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1907, vol. xi, pp. 589 and 590.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

Notes on The

"i, i, i, . . . ," changing, it may be, occasionally to a "hi, hi, hi, ..." "That one all-a-same bird," remarked one of my Larrekiya boys, who stood near to me, quite overcome with excitement; and, indeed, I did now recognize the similarity to the trill of the great stone-plover or "curlew" (*Oedicnemus sp.*). The leader having in the interim returned to the starting point and thus completed that part of the performance in which we might be prone to find an analogy with the polonaise of a modern ball, suddenly "doubles" or breaks to a running pace and all the others follow his example. He selects a wide spiral course, gradually nearing the centre and concentrating the body of men to a mass of humanity which to the observer seems to be moving in confusion and disorder. The pace quickens. The men stamp the ground with their feet, at the same time throwing up their arms and keeping them erect from the shoulder. An explosive shriek from the leader is echoed by the voices of all the others. The stamping of feet ceases and the arms of the performers drop to their sides. The leader now steps out to a position in front of his group of men, who, all of them, have turned to face the same way, viz., towards him. Looking to one side and lifting his arm in that direction, the leader emits a high-pitched shriek, which, as his arm is swept downwards on that side, is followed by a combined roaring "hoi" of all the others. This item is repeated several times over; alternately on one side and the other, in succession. This concludes another part of the corrobboree.

All performers now form themselves into a semi-circular group. The excitement is intense; forcible argument and debating ensue, accompanied by jocular shouting and laughing, which are repeatedly stimulated by gleeful interjections of "irr," an exclamation common to all Australian tribes.[1]

Having come to some different arrangement among themselves, a "tempo" is set by all members clapping either one or both of their hands upon the sides of their thighs, or their buttocks, producing dull and drum-like sounds by the impact. The latter are in marked unison and rhythmical. A performer now jumps from the semicircle of the time-beaters and runs round in a circle, facing its centre, and all the while stamping his feet. The interest and excitement increase among the audience, who further subsidize the accompaniment with a note, that is produced by a spluttering movement of the lips and sounds like "brr, brr, brr." As the stamping of the performer is accelerated, the clapping quickens with it. All at once he throws up his head and shouts "poop." This solicits an immediate response of "iah" from all others present.

Stationing himself in the centre, he next cuts some wonderfully clever and athletic antics. At the start he stamps the ground vigorously with both feet in alternation; the crowd keeping excellent time with their accompaniment of clapping hands upon their buttocks. As his pace increases, the beats of the hands become sharper and both hands are used (usually when striking the buttocks more posteriorly). While he stamps his feet, the performer, at the same time, vibrates

[1] *Vide* footnote, H. Basedow, *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 33.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

continued all the while, is at this stage strengthened. Any of these acts may be interrupted at any moment by changing to the "hauling of sail or anchor" scene and many interjections of "poop" and "ish" accompany them. The performer himself now ceases to stamp with his feet, but in place thereof he bends his legs at the knees and knocks his thighs together while he extends his arms outwards, either in front or at the side of him.

Corrobboree of a fight.—During several of the corrobborees described, a chant was heard which accompanied the acting in addition to the clapping of hands against the thighs or buttocks. In trying to reproduce the words or syllables of this chant, the nearest analogy I can find is—

"*Tupera monan la jerra*
Tupera monan la jerra,"

and

"*Tupatunan tenakomejona.*"

These chants are muttered uninterruptedly throughout the particular part. The corrobboree of a fight consists in the imitation of a spear duel between two angry blackfellows. They carry the same kind of reed-spears as was described under the "kangaroo ceremony." They first place themselves in defiance of one another at either side of the half-circle and go through all sorts of antics, brandishing their spears, rolling their eyes, and furiously throwing their bodies about. Next they start running about the ring and stamp their feet, throwing up their arms and knocking their thighs together in much the same way as previously described.

Corrobboree of the jungle fowl.—After the usual excessive amount of shouting, jabbering, and excited shrieks of laughter, an old man runs forward into the ring. He bends his arms at the elbow and holds them close against the sides of his body, while the closed fists rest on his chest, an attitude resembling that of a professional runner. This is to resemble the wings of the bird (*Leipoa*). He looks about the ground from side to side as though in search of something. Presently he imitates the bird's call with a shrill penetrating voice which sounds like "he-r-r-r-l." The onlookers' accompaniment consists in producing short spluttering and bubbling noises with their lips that sound like "brrl, brrl, brrl." The performer often interrupts the proceedings by shouting "he," to which all others respond with a loud "yeh." Now he throws up clouds of dust behind him with his feet, in imitation of the way in which the jungle fowl scratch and throw up the earth into the enormous mounds that contain their eggs.

To conclude the ceremony, all performers are led off again by the original leader in Indian file and go through much the same performance as they did in the initiation of the ceremony; the final shouts and shrieks, after the completion of the "trot" in spiral line, being particularly loud and enthusiastic.

Captain King[1] was probably the first white man to have witnessed the

[1] *Survey Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, p. 114.

A Bathurst Island Mourning Rite.

Sir :

121 Late in February, 1913, word came to Darwin that a fatal epidemic was prevalent in Bathurst and Melville Islands, and I was instructed to visit the islands and do anything possible to help.

122 I arrived at the Roman Catholic Mission Station at the southern end of Apsley Strait on Bathurst Island on March 2nd, and four days later, with the kindly assistance of Father Coudreau, set off up the Strait in a ten-foot sailing dinghy with a Malay, Matthew Gar, who had a smattering of the native language, two adult islanders, Mari and Dulin, a small native boy, Olinyarra, and stores. On the fourth day at Marinlampi, about two miles from Point Brace, at the northern end of the strait, a native camp was found. There were about thirty natives in the group, variously painted.

765 An old man, later found to be named Kerbo, was sitting chanting beside a small heap of red stones in the centre of a cleared circle about twelve feet in diameter. A pile of cooked yams was beside him and he was

[177] scraping them with a mission-given knife. The time of my arrival was about ten in the morning. A small boy squatted beside the old man at times but otherwise the natives lounged about outside the circle indifferently coming and going. It appeared that a death ceremony was in progress. A woman sitting with her three boys under a pandanus palm nearby was pointed out as the mother of the dead man. When all the yams had been peeled the old man walked about in

[595] the circle chanting and clacking two sticks together. There was an intermission until about 2 p.m., when the old man resumed his chanting. About 4 p.m. he returned again and proceeded to cut up the yams, placing

(p 79-A)

I was told that
765 the old man had chanted about the *Tarula*,[1]
533 who had planted magic on the beaches to
754 the north at the beginning of the wet season.
[648] The sun heated the magic, and up it went like smoke and the wind blew it all about. The magic works on the blackfellow with a feeling like a snake crawling up the legs. It moves up to his stomach, and when it reaches his heart he eats no more and dies. He also sang that he was an old man, his wind was short and soon he would die. Later he sang of a fight he had had with another tribe. Later he sang of people who came and fed him while he was sick. When standing in the water he was calling on the others to make the ceremony. When he threw up the stones he called *wei ina*, i.e "finish."

754 During the next four weeks I visited tribes in various parts of the islands and heard the same story. I was shown a sample of the magic. It was a tightly woven string bag about the size of a billiard ball and stuffed with kapok. This was said to have been "sung" before it was buried.

124 Statistics of the mortality of the epidemic
902 presented a problem. The only words for numbers which I could obtain with certainty

[1] The *tarula* were mainland blacks in the employ of local white men. They were called *tarula* ("lightning") after the guns carried by their employers.

[p 80-A]

8:Fry D-5 (1913) 1950 OI20 Tiwi OI20

881 while a small trestle had been built of three upright sticks about 2 ft. 6 in. high in the [343] form of an isosceles triangle, with the apex to the west. Cross sticks were laid across the top of this and the sticks covered with grass. Three old men then took Cooper to a point about twenty yards east of the trestle and faced towards it, two on his right, one on his left. They each held a [411] flat bladed club, *irrualla*, in the left hand horizontally above the head and beat the [533] point of it with a light round club with a pointed end, *merkunga*. Cooper held three *merkunga* in the crook of his left arm, one being taken and used by one of the old men. The old men advanced towards the trestle, chanting and beating their clubs in the way described. Cooper was slightly behind them. Young men followed the group. Cooper stood before the trestle as at an altar while the old men chanted for about five minutes. Water was called for, and brought by a woman and given to a visitor from the Mugula tribe. He then poured the water over Cooper's head. Cooper rubbed his belly with his *merkunga*. The visitor then pulled the hair string free from one end of the wooden collar, *aladini*, while Cooper made very wry faces. The collar was removed and the ceremony ended. I was [439] presented with Cooper's *aladini* and *merkunga* in return for gifts, and I was cheerfully escorted back to the beach where the lugger was waiting for me.

H. K. Fry,
D.S.O., B.Sc., M.D.

[p. 168 A]

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Tiwi native on Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day Kulama ceremony.

[P.10]

884 are allowed to dig the yam. A special dance area, or cere-
[460] monial ring, is cleared on the ground and a special cook-
[535] ing fire is built in its center. On each of the three ceremonial
[305] days the participants paint themselves in specified ways
with ocher. During the evening of each day, while the yams
are soaking or cooking, the male participants, singly or
884 together, walk slowly counterclockwise around the cere-
● 533 monial fire, beating sticks together as an accompaniment
[534] to specially composed songs. At times the wives, who re-
main outside the ring, sing with the men, or they may join
[535] their husbands in traditional dances that imitate various
aspects of the natural world around them.

The songs are a vital part of the ritual. They must be newly composed for the occasion and may relate to any event or abstract idea the composer chooses. The songs
[154] often deal with injustices the singer has experienced in the past year, about which he wishes to register an "official" complaint:

[539] "There was a funeral,
You went first, I came after.
Old people came in first.
I was late because I had a *Kulama*.
Why didn't you wait for me?"

or

"When Dory have baby girl
The old man said, 'That's for you.'
Dory, my mother-in-law, she burns me.
Dory doesn't know the old people way.
I would like to kill her."

Others may be in the nature of news reports, in which the listeners are informed of anything interesting that may have happened to the singer during the preceding year.
CED For instance, the composer of the following song had just

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P.14,(A)—Qualist]
[P.13,(B)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1954,1962) 1963 CE20 Tiwi CE20

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YAMS TO BE USED in *Kulama* ceremony are retrieved from a fresh-water pool in which they had been soaked overnight.

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For instance,
THE COMPOSER of the following song had just returned from Brisbane, where he and a group of eight other aborigines had performed dances in honor of Queen Elizabeth's 1954 visit to Australia:

[539]

"The Queen was talking in England,
'I would like to see a blackfellow dance.'
When I was in Brisbane, the Queen said,
'I would like to meet a black boy!'
And I went up.
King Philip, he had a good look at me.
He was watching a lot as I danced.
I was singing into a loud-speaker."

[173]

Some songs are historic in nature, retelling an event that must be kept alive according to the traditions of the tribe. One such composition recalls the Japanese attack on Darwin during World War II:

[539]

"An enemy plane flies low over Melville Island.
The men on the ground, at the word 'Standby,'
Shoot it down with a cannon."

The children of the singer are often song subjects. This first example describes how the children behaved in one of their father's dreams.

[539]

"My children have gone to the other side
of the island.
But they must come back as they are hard up
for tobacco.
My children have now come back.
I know this for they have taken the tobacco
which I have held in my hand."

or

"My children will wear clothes and shoes.
They will go to school and learn to write."

All the songs have the same chanting tune, which is associated with the *Kulama* ceremony, and the composer must fit his words to the set meter of the chant. In many cases this requires using archaic words that are no longer a

[P.14,(A)]

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YOUNG GIRL AND BOY accompany fathers as men bring yams from pool to the ceremonial ring. There the yams will be

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part of Tiwi speech. Poetic license in pronunciation and syllabification often occurs. The Tiwi have high regard for the linguistic ability needed to become a good Tiwi composer and singer, and instruction in the art of song composition and delivery is given to the initiates. Each initiate must perform in the *Kulama* before he can be considered a "graduate." According to my Tiwi informants, this requirement is the hardest of all, and it is also the reason for there being no set age for initiation. The old people are said to watch the young, and when the observers consider them mature enough, they *swoop* down upon their choices "like chicken hawks, without warning"—as the Tiwi say—and start the initiates along the path to adulthood.

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As far as I know, the *Kulama* ceremony has no parallel elsewhere in Australia. And there are many interesting questions that come to mind concerning the origin of the *Kulama* as it exists today. For instance, why is instruction in the preparation of a poisonous yam that is not part of the daily diet considered so important for initiation into adulthood? What is the origin of the idea that a yam has power over good and evil, and health and sickness? Why is such prominence accorded a yam in what is principally a hunting and gathering society?

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Any answers to these questions must be highly speculative, for the origin of the ceremony and its development lie in the unrecorded history of the Tiwi. However, I believe the following statements may well be valid.

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Instruction in the natural resources of the land was considered vital to becoming an adult. Because the *Kulama* yam is poisonous and is not widely distributed, it was never part of the regular diet, but it could be used in economic emergencies if properly prepared. Instruction in its preparation was therefore extremely important as a potential survival measure. However, since the Tiwi live in a favorable environment, it is highly probable that such emergencies were very rare, so it was considered expedient to hold annual instruction periods. Because knowledge of

[See P.15.(A) for other part of caption and picture --analyst]

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 0120 Tiwi 0120

served as seats except when the mast was mounted in the forward platform.

It took us quite a while to load, but we finally launched out into the bay about mid-morning. In the stern, sat Albert, his knees folded under so that as he lifted and dipped the heavy ironwood paddle only his arms and back supplied the power. He kept in perfect time with Big Jack who sat just in front of him. They would both paddle on the same side for about six strokes and then bringing the paddles overhead would continue on the other side with perfect rhythm. Agnes and Tchuwiunga sat amidships among the rolls of blankets and cartons of food, while I surveyed the scene from the forward seat, clutching my waterproofed KLM overnight bag containing my camera, toothbrush, and change of clothing and the ever-present supply of pencils and "six-penny" notebooks.

The bay was smooth, too smooth, for not a ripple broke the gently rolling surface. We could, however, see and hear breakers on Piriu Point; so, with the promise of some wind to propel the craft, and incidentally break the close, muggy atmosphere, Albert and Big Jack paddled strongly and swiftly so that soon we reached the opposite shore and began to work our way up to the point. Although the men were silent, Agnes entertained us with the singing of other women's love songs. All women, regardless of the degree of affection they have for their husband, have lovers and compose long love songs extolling the chosen man's virtues. Agnes, however, only sang her song about her lover, Ginger-Two, when out of audible range of her husband.

About noon the canoe rounded the point and at once a strong easterly wind prompted us to raise the sail. This required little effort as the thin and greatly patched canvas was permanently attached to the 12-foot mast and boom with wire. All that was needed was to drop the mast through a hole in the forward platform and let the boom fall into place. Unfortunately it was soon apparent that the forces of nature and the design of the canoe were against us; the wind was too strong and without a keel the canoe could not head into the wind which was dead against us. The mast was unstepped, the sail furled, and the paddles taken up once more, but now instead of a calm sea we faced large rollers, some of which broke under the force of the wind. It was heavy going; Agnes

settlement work. It seemed the chief advantage was that they received 'money-in-the-finger' from the skins they caught. They didn't understand why they didn't also get paid for the settlement work. I kept silent, but soon they turned to me and said, "You get job; how much you pay?" I told them, and then went on to say that out of that salary I had to pay someone for the food I ate, the clothes I wore, the house I lived in and so on, whereas they did not have to pay for the flour, tea, sugar, meat, blankets, or clothes the welfare people gave them. There was a long silence during which, I believe, each man was figuring how much all these benefits were worth in hard money. Finally Ginger said slowly, "Maybe, this way more better."

Soon the visitors rose and returned to their fires. Someone started a song, a low nasal chant. Another, a woman, began a high-pitched love song, and to this discordant lullaby I soon fell asleep.

As usual, it was barely light when the camp came to life again. After the customary tea breakfast, the various families discussed among themselves the day's plans. Black Joe and Long Peter, their wives and children, were taking the canoe up-river to hunt. Young Brook and his brothers, Danny Brown and Charlie Cook, their wives and children, soon left to hunt in the area back of Minianapi. Charlie Quiet and Roger also left. "Now we go?" I turned in question to Albert. "No, we stay behind. Build house. No good you go bush. Too much grass, plenty big mob cheeky snake. By and by that mob burn grass; then we go bush." It seemed like a logical explanation, but I was disappointed.

The day was already sticky and muggy, and tired of inactivity I started off toward the creek, saying I was going for a swim. Both natives jumped up and said, "No. No. Too much crocodile, more better go along billabong." So with Agnes ahead we started down the path leading away from the creek. Soon we were out of the thick tangle of bushes separating the clearing from the true bush. Now the path led over the rocky, dusty ground, which had but recently been burned. The trunks of the large bloodwood and stringy-bark trees were blackened for about four feet up from their base. The spiraled trunks of the screwpalm, as well as their lower dried leaves, also had a charred appearance. Except for an occa-

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Fig. 20. Althea and Crissy-boy showing me the large snake which Filicy had killed

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262 cooked, with that delicious charcoal-broiled flavor so much sought after in our more elite dining establishments or in our backyards.

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224 Just as we had started our feast the other group arrived and soon had their fire started. Although no overt comparison of each other's catch was made, it was quite obvious that their hunt had been more successful. Besides the half dozen possums and two geese, they brought over to show us an extremely large water [431] snake about ten or twelve feet long. Shortly, Filicy again came over and presented us with one of their possums. After this tre- [513] mendous feast, everyone stretched out and went to sleep, rousing only in time to arrive back at Minianapi in time to meet the geese.
123 All the way back in the canoe, Crissy-boy played with two hairless
231 baby possums, creating quite an uproar as he put them in everyone's
484 hair where they clung with their tiny feet. They died before we reached the shore and were thrown into the water. Althea was

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12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 0120 Tiwi 0120

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equally entertaining as she sang some risqué love songs she had 533
picked up around camp.

The evening's goose hunt was even more unsuccessful than the 123
earlier hunts. Two of the men separated and went down river and
killed three geese, but the others, upstream in the usual place, did 223
not even see any, and there was more talk of *mobudities* by everyone
way into the night.

The following day was the last and, as the Assistant Super- 123
intendent was due that evening, feverish work was done by one
and all on the long neglected house. Evidently the arrival of Paul 648
scared off the ghosts, for that evening we almost had a goose per
person, and my final memory of Minianapi is one of flickering fires
in the moonlight and the smell of fresh roasted goose carried on
the gentle breezes.

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Fig. 21. After the return trip the launch's motor gets a much needed overhaul

ters, supervising the lubras' work and ordering stores, which are brought from Darwin by the mission's own lugger *St. Francis*. The pleasant lunch we had at the refectory, where wide windows, open all round, admitted every wandering breeze, was due to their efforts, and later I was to see something of the results of their teaching.

School, both for boys and for girls, takes up only two and a half hours each day, but the pupils learn quickly, and the more they are taught the more they can absorb. Reading and writing are mastered without any more difficulty than in the case of white children of the same age, though the pupils were very shy and almost inaudible when exhibiting their prowess. Arithmetic they do not take to so kindly, unless they happen to be interested by some problem that has a definitely practical application to their own lives; but drawing comes natural to the islanders, as it does to the blacks of the mainland, where I had already seen very spirited sketches made by aboriginal children. Of the affection of the children, both for the sisters and the mission fathers, there was no doubt. To be as close to them as possible was an honour they were all bent on securing.

THE "blackies," as they call the girls, range in age from tiny tots to those who are practically young women. They were all much excited by the novelty of our visit, bubbling over with laughter, whispering and giggling together. The older "blackies" eye a visitor coyly, smiling over their shoulders with a flash of white teeth; and, when the pilot and I came along with one of the sisters to hear them sing the "Magnificat" and "Adeste Fideles," they fled shrieking, only to turn round and giggle again when they thought that they were far enough away.

"No more gammon!" called the sister, and they lined up demurely to sing their hymns right tunefully, with spasms of giggles in the intervals. To hold up a finger is quite sufficient to bring shrieks of delight from these childish, happy creatures. "Georgie," a very little boy with a very big tummy, so young that he was not yet at the boys' school, sang "Georgie Porgie, puddiny pie, kissed the girls and made them cry" with much aplomb and gesture. If Georgie was at the girls' school, he did not forget that he was a man. He spoke man's language, not woman's talk such as women by custom must use on Bathurst Island, and he sat down like a man with knees wide apart, not together as a woman must.

Then, while the older "blackies" formed a circle, chanting in their own language and clapping their hands in time, little girls, two by two, performed women's dances, which again differ from those of the men. There were buffalo, bullock, and lugger dances, when they imitated the animals with arms widespread or bent slightly at the elbows to represent the horns, or held at angles such as those at which sails are set on a lugger, while, now and then, two little fists beaten together faithfully copied the "put-put" of Diesel engines.

More ambitious and complicated was the dance of the overseas mail 'plane that flies from Singapore to Darwin, when whirling arms represented the propellers and stamping feet the beat of the engines. There is, by the way, a sacred language used for songs, and it is only in this language that the name of the dead can be mentioned. If by chance anyone should mention a dead man's name in the ordinary language, every one within hearing will spit with vigour. If defenceless, the maker of such a faux pas will be hit about the head.